

Maine School Administrative District #57

Professional Learning Communities Support System Plan

Developed 2008

MSAD #57 Board Approved: May 28, 2008



Section A

MSAD #57 includes the towns of Alfred, Limerick, Lyman, Newfield, Shapleigh, and Waterboro, and is composed of five elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. The student population is approximately 3600, and is served by approximately 300 professional staff. This Professional Learning Communities Support System (PLCSS) plan is designed to provide support for all teachers, guidance counselors, library-media specialists, special education consultants, speech and hearing clinicians, athletic directors, and literacy specialists, as well as educational technicians in the district.

The Recertification Team will work closely with area institutions of higher learning, such as USM, whenever necessary, to direct the development of in-service programs and the training of staff members. In addition, a collaborative use of area specialists (i.e. school counselors and speech clinicians) to help develop Professional Certification Action Plans (PCAP) will be utilized to facilitate this process.

Section B

The PLCSS will provide strong and appropriate support services in order to develop effective educational practice for all certified staff supported by this plan. The PLCSS will provide the Commissioner of Education with recommendations for educational personnel seeking professional certification, professional renewal, certification advancement (see Chpt 118, 1.4 (a-h)), or educational technician authorization (see Chpt 118, 11.1).

The PLCSS will have the following responsibilities:

1. The induction of new staff supported by this plan
2. Inform all new staff supported by this plan of their certification responsibilities and provide each with a copy of this PLCSS plan and associated documents/forms
3. Supervise the development and submission of:
 - a. Initial Professional Certification Action Plans and supporting documentation for new educators and for master teacher candidates
 - b. Renewal plans for teachers and educational specialists
4. The assignment of a mentor to new teachers and new educational specialists that require one
5. Provide a process for approving authorization renewal plans for educational technicians

All decisions made by the PLCSS will be made in a professional, fair, and equitable manner. In the event that staff members do not follow procedures for recertification, the issue will be brought to the Recertification Team for consideration. A staff member who feels that a PLCSS member's decision is not correct should address this concern to the building's Recertification Team representative, or the administrative representative for the district. The concern will then be presented to the Recertification Team, as a whole, for re-consideration. If the staff member still does not deem the decision satisfactory, he or she may address the Team in person. For each Team decision, consensus will be utilized.

All materials gathered during the course of the certification process are to be considered legally confidential, including, but not limited to, self-assessments, observations, PCAPs, and recommendations (see Chpt 118, 4.1). No materials, either written or verbal, may be divulged to any outside sources, including building principals, other administrators, other teachers, and any other staff, unless the individual expressly gives permission in writing. It is the responsibility of each PLCSS member to respect the individual's rights of confidentiality.

The components of the PLCSS include a Recertification Team as well as a Mentor Network.

Recertification Team

The Recertification Team of MSAD #57 will be composed of the following: one (1) administrator, seven (7) teachers representing each school, and one (1) educational technician.

The ***chairperson*** (also known as the PLCSS chairperson) will meet the requirements as defined in Chapter 118, 1.3 (k), and will be elected by the Recertification Team at the last meeting of each year to act as chairperson for the following year. The chairperson will be responsible for certification procedures throughout the district including those endorsed by the Recertification Team and Mentor Network. Duties of the chairperson will be as follows:

1. Coordinate the setting of Recertification Team and Mentor Network meeting dates and times.
2. Set meeting agendas.
3. Facilitate meetings.
4. Notify members of meetings and other necessary information.
6. Communicate with the State of Maine Department of Education and other necessary parties.
7. Officially respond to PCAPs and applications for certification action, with the advisement of the Recertification Team.
8. Ensure staff access (electronically and in hard copy) to this PLCSS plan and associated documents/forms.
9. Act as the contact person for all Recertification Team members, as well as Mentor Network members.
10. Act as the official spokesperson for the district in regard to certification issues.
11. Delegate responsibilities to Recertification Team and Mentor Network members.

The administrative Team representative will also be able to sign certification documentation for the state (having submitted the appropriate form to the Department) in the event that the Recertification Chair is unable or unavailable to sign.

The Recertification Team meetings will be held on a monthly basis. The monthly meeting dates will be determined for the entire year during the first meeting. Members must attend eighty percent (80%) of the meetings. In the case of poor attendance, a replacement will be selected from the pool of qualified staff, and the annual stipend for both individuals will be adjusted accordingly. (Special circumstances will be considered by the Recertification Team, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.)

The responsibilities of the ***Recertification Team Members*** are as follows:

1. Assist all staff supported by this plan in the recertification process.
2. Respond to (approve/disapprove) all staff requests for work-related study leading toward recertification credit. (See Section G of this plan.)
3. Serve as a liaison to respective staff in all matters of professional growth related to certification.
4. Work closely with the district's leadership to determine areas of need for professional growth.
5. Maintain necessary records related to recertification of staff.
6. Report to the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee periodically.

Mentor Network

Each provisionally certified or temporarily certified (targeted needs, conditional, and transitional (if necessary)) staff member supported by this plan will be assigned a mentor whose main task will be to coach his or her mentee in reaching a higher level of certification (see Chpt 118, 1.3(g)). In doing so, mentors will provide guidance and support based on a professional learning community model. Mentors will also assist their mentees in developing collegial professional partnerships as the primary means of professional development and achieving action plan goals (see Chpt 118, 2.7 (a-b)).

Qualifications of ***mentors*** (see Chpt 118, 2.8 (a-c)):

1. At least three years of experience as an educator.
2. Working under a professional certificate.
3. Completed a mentor training program approved by the State of Maine Department of Education.

The responsibilities of each ***mentor*** are as follows:

1. Be a resource for the mentee either directly or indirectly.
2. Collaborate with the mentee to design a PCAP which will help the new educator provide documentation of meeting Maine's Ten Teaching Standards.
3. Conduct pre and post-observation conferences.
4. Observe all aspects of performance (including at least three documented observations).
5. Meet on regular basis with the mentee to collaborate and determine the progress of the new educator.
6. Make a formal recommendation to the Recertification Team chairperson, indicating whether or not the mentee has met the requirements for a higher level of certification.

Section C

The PLCSS members in each building will make a general presentation to all staff in their buildings by the end of September, each school year. New staff supported by this plan will also meet separately with their building PLCSS members for a formal orientation to discuss:

- Responsibilities
- Roles
- Procedures
- Available services
- Training and professional development
- Process for achieving a professional certificate

Before the end of September, each school year, all educational technicians will be provided with an opportunity to meet with members of the Recertification Team to review procedures.

This plan and associated documents/forms will be distributed to these staff members so that they are aware of the procedures required to achieve and maintain certification or authorization.

PLCSS members will present information regarding staff development and training opportunities to the staff. This may include:

- University coursework
- Recertification Team approved courses for recertification credit
- Classroom visitations
- Professional reading
- Workshops and conferences
- Coaching and observation sessions
- Classroom projects and activities
- Consultation with content area specialists

Section D

Appointment to the Recertification Team shall be made from a pool of qualified staff (see Chapter 118, 2.5, (d-f)). Non-teaching staff must have three (3) years of experience in education. Qualified staff members interested in a vacancy shall submit a written letter of interest to the PLCSS chairperson (or designee). Qualified staff wishing to become a mentor must complete the application process, which includes a written statement of interest and two references (one peer, and one from the current supervising principal).

Members of the Recertification Team will hold a three-year term. Previous to the end of the term, a member can opt to continue in the position or resign. When multiple staff members from the same building are interested in a vacancy, the staff of the school will vote for the individual who they wish to represent their building. A written notice, detailing the vote and its outcome, will be sent to the PLCSS chairperson.

Mentors are expected to work with the same mentee for the duration of the mentee's provisional (or temporary) certification period (usually two years).

At the beginning of each school year, the names of the PLCSS members shall be recommended to the Superintendent of Schools for approval by the School Committee.

Section E

The PLCSS will make every effort to match qualified mentors with new educators requiring a mentor using the following prioritizing guidelines:

- 1) Location – School, building
- 2) Impact areas – Content area, grade level, specialization

In the event of a match that does not proceed successfully, a change can be made. (See Chapter 118, 2.8 (c)) The staff member seeking a change shall submit a written request to the PLCSS chairperson.

Teachers seeking the Master Teacher Certificate, or its renewal, will work closely with a colleague, in consultation with the building Recertification Team member, to develop a Master Certificate Action Plan (or Master Certificate Renewal Plan) that supports the applicant in meeting the requirements established in Chapter 118, Section 7.1., including, but not limited to, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Section F

Professional Certification Action Plans will be prepared by each mentee, in cooperation with his/her mentor.

A pre-conference, observation and post-conference will be conducted prior to the writing of the mentee's PCAP. The conferences and observation will provide the direction for the PCAP goals. Goals and strategies will be written to reflect Maine's Ten Teaching Standards. The goals and strategies for improving professional skills will be consistent with the certificate level or endorsement. By the end of the provisional certification period, evidence of meeting each of the ten standards will be required.

Teachers seeking the Master Teacher Certificate, or its renewal, will develop a plan as defined in section E.

Section G

The process of delivery of services and the provision of technical assistance shall be ongoing for the staff through each assigned mentor or building representative. Mentors will recommend resources for services and technical assistance available to fulfill the goals and objectives of their mentee's PCAP. The Recertification Team will provide each renewing staff member with available materials, services, and ideas to help the individual meet the goals of his/her recertification plan.

In order for a staff member supported by this plan to renew a professional/master certificate he/she must:

- Complete six (6) credits of work-related study within the five-year certification period

- a) 3 credits must be from an accredited college or university
 - b) 3 credits may be composed of equivalent CEUs, contact hours, or an alternative plan
- Document correlation between the study and Maine's Ten Teaching Standards (for professional), or the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (for master).
- Receive pre-approval for the study by a member of the Recertification Team
 - o Documentation of correlation to the standards, and pre-approval authorization will be summarized on the Professional Certification Renewal Plan (PCRP) form.

In order for an Educational Technician to renew an authorization, he/she must:

- Complete the equivalent of 3 credits of work-related study within the five-year authorization period. The 3 credits may be composed of college credits, CEUs, or contact hours.
 - o Work-related study will be summarized on the Educational Technician Authorization Renewal Plan (ETARP) form.

It will be the responsibility of all certified and authorized staff supported by this plan to maintain a current certificate/authorization while employed by MSAD #57, as well as provide the district with a copy of the respective document.

Section H

In addition to each temporarily or provisionally certified teacher having a mentor, all teachers and educational specialists are members of PLCs in MSAD #57. The new staff will receive support services and professional development based on the goals of the PLC and PCAP goals. Educational Technicians are encouraged to become members of established PLCs, when possible.

Section I

A confidential file will be created for each staff member, which will contain PCAPs, ETARPs, MCAPs, MCRPs, other support system documents, and reports. These documents and reports will include information or documentation of meeting Maine's Ten Teaching Standards, or the National Board Standards. This file will be kept secure at the Central Office of MSAD #57. (See related MSAD #57 Policy GBJ – Personnel Records and Files.)

Section J

The PLCSS will complete annual program evaluations to assure quality, effectiveness, and efficient management. Evaluation will be organized and directed by the Recertification Team. This will include an online questionnaire at the end of the mentor/mentee cycle, completed by both the mentors and mentees. There will also be a separate questionnaire for staff completing the five-year renewal cycle.

In addition, the Recertification Team members will log, in an online database, all certification-related activities performed.

All of this data will be analyzed at the last meeting of the year to evaluate the PLCSS. Goals for the ensuing years will be established based on this analysis.

If necessary, the Recertification Team may meet during the summer to make changes that will be implemented for the next school year.

Section K

Those who've received approved training by the Maine Department of Education will provide training to all new mentors. Training and orientation of new Recertification Team members will be offered at the first meeting of the year, and then as needed. PLCSS members will attend Maine Department of Education certification conferences, workshops, and trainings when available and appropriate.

Section L

This plan was adopted by the MSAD #57 Board of Directors on May 28, 2008.